essential medicines to the public in adequate quantities at fair and reasonable prices As and when there is any report of shortage of any essential medicine, Government takes appropriate action to meet the situation. There has been no shortage of drugs and if there was any shortage that was localised and therapeutic equivalents were available. The prices of a number of formulations based on Chlorpromazine, Thioridazine, Trifluoperazine, Amitryptline, Imipramine, Triprolidine. Polymixin B. Sulphate, Flucinolone Acetonide etc. have already been reduced in the recent past. The exiting drug policy is also under review and the objective of making drugs available in adequate quantities at reasonable prices will be kept in mind.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d). As stated in part (a) above, the existing drug policy is being reviewed so that there is due emphasis and encouragement to the production of essential drugs in the coutry.

Medical care to the Salt Growers

2245. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the salt-growers in Ran of Kutch and other areas in the country are reported to have not been provided with medical health care/check up; and

(b) whether any Government agency has recently been entrusted with this job, if so, what are the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI RASHEED MASOOD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) According to the information received from salt Commissioner to the Government of India, Ministry of Industry (Department of Industrial Development), it is the Primary responsiblity of State Government and employers to look after the health of the Salt Labourers. However, the Salt Department of the Government of India, provides assistance from CESS proceeds to State Government, and other agencies as per guidelines contained in 'Code of Principles'. Holding of General Health and Eye camps for check up of salt labourers is a regular feature. Recently a comprehensive Health survey of salt labourers in arid Rajasthan state has been entrusted at a cost of Rs. 2.55 lakhs to Regional Research Medical Centre at Jodhpur under I.C.M.R.

Fall in the prices of Petrochemicals

2246. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that international prices of petrochemical raw materials for synthetic industry have fallen considerably in the recent past;

(b) what has been the quantum of fall in the prices of paraxylene, MEG, DMT and PTA during the last one year;

(c) what are the present ruling prices of the above items referred to in para (b) above in the international market; and

(d) whether with a view to safeguard the indigenous industry Government propose to increase import duty on these materials in order to compare favourably with fair selling prices of the domestic produce?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) Prices of petrochemical commoditiles do fluctuate in internationaj market.

(b) and (c) The prices of synthetic fibre raw materials ruled high in early 1989 and fell considerably in the early part of 1990. It is understood that there has recently been a spurt in these prices because of the Middle east situation.